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United States Department of State

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
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RELEASED IN FULL

TO: The Acting Secretary

FROM: AF - George E. Moose

SUBJECT: Rwandan Refugee Repatriation and Ouster of the
Prime Minister

SUMMARY

The forced repatriation of Rwandan refugees has stopped for now. Zairian Prime Minister Kengo has given UNHCR four months to voluntarily repatriate the Rwandans. However, the dismissal of the Rwanda Cabinet by the National Assembly may discourage the refugees. Special Coordinator Bogosian leaves next week for consultations in Europe and the region, as will the new UN Coordinator, Jose Luis Jesus of Cape Verde.

THE RWANDAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Following his meeting with UN High Commissioner Ogata on August 29, Prime Minister Kengo agreed to suspend forcible repatriations until December 31, giving UNHCR until that date to remove the refugees from Zairian territory. Mrs. Ogata told Kengo this deadline is unrealistic, but promised to try. The Prime Minister conceded that if the UNHCR's monthly status reports show real progress, that deadline could be extended. In his press conference, PM Kengo noted that Zaire's earlier decision to expel the refugees was based on a consensus among President Mobutu, the government, and the Parliament. Kengo has stressed the unity of the Zairian people in their desire to see the refugees depart, a rare national consensus.

Mrs. Ogata now travels to the region through September 6 to focus on a new process for voluntary repatriation. She will visit Bujumbura, Tanzania border camps, Dar es Salaam, Kigali, Goma camps, Gbadolite (President Mobutu's home), and Kinshasa.

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There is a strong and direct link between Zairian actions and the future behavior of Tanzania, whose leaders will watch closely to see if Zaire's behavior produces a solution. For that reason, there is concern that Zaire not be "rewarded" for the expulsions. That being said, Zaire is currently treated "worse" than other refugee host nations, in that it bears the burden of their presence yet receives no bilateral development assistance. The Belgians are taking the lead in developing support for an aid package for eastern Zaire.

Mrs. Ogata notes that the crisis is more than a humanitarian problem, and hopes that the repatriation will buy time for a longer-term political solution. The international community must work with both host nations (to ensure continued responsible behavior towards the refugees) and Rwanda to create a climate to induce voluntary repatriation.

RWANDAN CABINET'S FALL NOT HELPFUL

The August 28 dismissal of the Rwandan Cabinet by the National Assembly will likely dampen voluntary repatriation prospects. The targets of the no-confidence motion were the Prime Minister, Justice Minister and Interior Minister, all moderate Hutus. Since the vast majority of refugees are Hutus, they may conclude that now is not the time to return to Rwanda.

On the other hand, Vice President, Minister of Defense and power behind the throne Paul Kagame assured Ambassador Rawson on August 30 that the new government would pursue return of the refugees, justice, national reconstruction, security and human rights under a rule of law, and creation of a government administration that was representative of all Rwandans. Indeed, Kagame stated that the reason for the government reshuffle was to move ahead quickly in these areas.

The new Cabinet gets mixed reviews, but on balance it reflects the GOR's continued commitment to reconciliation and moderate policies. We do believe, however, that Vice President Kagame and the Tutsi dominated RPF have strengthened their hold on power in Rwanda.

U.S. PLANS AND OTHER DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

Special Coordinator Richard Bogosian will depart for the region and consultations in key European capitals on September 7. He plans to be present in Addis Ababa September 11 for the OAU Central Organ meeting on the sub-region, and visit Kigali, Nairobi, Kampala and Kinshasa. Ambassador Bogosian may meet Zairian Prime Minister Kengo in Europe. On August 29, Bogosian

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met with newly named UN regional special envoy Jose Luis Jesus. Jesus, a highly regarded Cape Verdian diplomat, will have primary responsibility within the UN to organize a regional conference on refugees and peace. We, along with the French and others, see a regional political conference as the crucial first step towards a political settlement in the sub-region. We are holding inter-agency discussions on the relevant substantive issues.

We will continue to monitor events in Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire closely. We are pursuing a package of steps we can take to get the Rwandan government to move forward on prison reform, which should serve to lessen the fear of refugees that repatriation might lead to incarceration. On Zaire, we will work closely with our "Troika" partners (Belgium, France) to discourage any unilateral resumption of forced repatriations. This will require sustained demonstrations that the international community takes Zaire's security concerns seriously, does not single out Zaire for sole criticism, and is making a good faith effort at solving the refugee crisis.

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